

building COMMUNITY

For Indiana's Third Century

March/April 2003

**building
COMMUNITY**, a bimonthly publication of Indiana 2016, solicits articles from around Indiana that illustrate community-based efforts. Please electronically submit articles to jswenson@gov.state.in.us. Digital photographs are accepted and encouraged.

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Dialogue Nurtures New Friendships



*by Suzette
Solomon*

What happens when a group of 50 Jewish and 50 African American women get together? They can't stop talking! These women are part of the group Dialogue Today. Founded in 1984 by Theresa Guise, Diane Meyer Simon and Carole Stein, Dialogue Today's mission is to consider and deal with common problems through a working coalition dedicated to the reaffirmation of the commitment of African American and Jewish women to their common concerns for the dignity and rights of all people.

In order to secure balance between the two member groups, leadership alternates by having a Jewish or African American president every other administrative term. The group meets quarterly to discuss current events, have book talks, and attend lectures. Not only do these events take place, but the women also educate each other on their respective cultures and customs. For example, they have hosted programs on a Passover Seder, the history of the Black Church, Hanukkah, and Kwanzaa and attended each other's religious services.

In addition to providing stimulating conversations, Dialogue Today also offers friendships built upon mutual respect. Barbara Solomon, a long time member of Dialogue Today, said, "I feel lucky and enriched to have become part of this dynamic group, crossing paths with women whom I may have never met had I not become an active member of Dialogue Today." She added, "Listening to how a variety of knowledgeable women feel about issues and seeing things from another person's perspective are just some of the benefits to being part of such a group."

There is not simply one voice for each member group; there are numerous voices. Even if a topic of discussion does not garner consensus, the women always walk away with an appreciation for each other's opinions and a new way of looking at an issue. By talking and listening to each other, participants are able to explore new solutions to old and new problems.

For more information about Dialogue Today contact:
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Gatherings

by Judy O'Bannon

*The label
"Hoosier
hospitality"
isn't just a
tourism
marketing
tool. It is
a way of life
here in
Indiana.*



A "gathered people," that's what we Hoosiers are. Our ancestors have entered this land from all over the world. Many of the present-day regional differences or uniquenesses remind us of the origins of our grandparents or of our neighbors, and the rich tapestry of interwoven multi-cultural threads that together we create in Indiana.

Today, we too often view ourselves as the "given" - the group that has always been here. In addition,

we generally look upon those who have more recently arrived as "outsiders." There used to be a joke in small towns that it took 30 years to become a native resident. No time for that in today's rapidly moving, fluid world. We all pick up our bags and travel across borders for work and pleasure. Boundaries of old are no longer with the Internet, jet travel and CNN now essential parts of our daily lives. It is indeed a global living room, and we need to offer everyone a seat.

We often think of the residents of this state as those who came in from the great lakes area, down the Ohio River, over the National Road, or up through the Virginias, over the Falls of the Ohio and into Indiana. But far more of us arrived by car, bus, airplane and even foot to populate our cities and farmland. Staying where opportunity presented itself, we called our new spot on earth home.

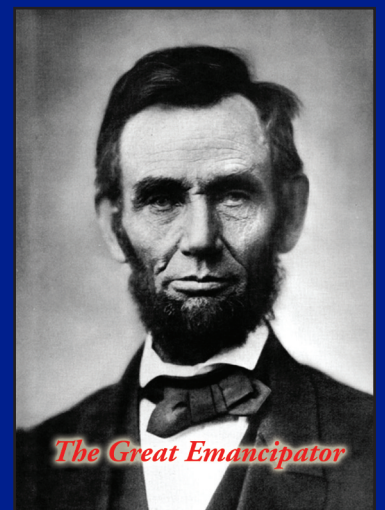
And so, this month's newsletter will focus on opportunities in our expanding communities to prosper with new ideas and skills brought along with our new neighbors. The label "Hoosier hospitality" isn't just a tourism marketing tool. It is a way of life here in Indiana.

The Great Emancipator, Abraham Lincoln spent one quarter of his life – fourteen years – in Indiana. His critical formative years, from youth to manhood, played out on a farm in what is now Spencer County.

Widely recognized as one of America's greatest presidents, Lincoln is often credited with preserving the Union, freeing the slaves, and confirming a government "of the people, by the people, for the people."

If you stop by the Society's home, the Indiana History Center, 450 West Ohio Street, in Indianapolis, you'll enjoy a fascinating look at *Five Unsettling Stories*, an exhibit about exploration, discovery, migration, settlement, diversity and change in Indiana.

Visit www.indianahistory.org for more programs and information.



The Great Emancipator

New Consul Promotes International Understanding



There's a new office in **Indianapolis** that not only reflects the changing demographics of the state, but also fills a role in promoting international understanding. It's the office of Sergio Aguilera, the newly appointed Mexican consul. As consul, Aguilera's responsibilities are to serve the three-state area that includes Indiana, Kentucky and most of Ohio with passports, visas and identification. Under his leadership, the staff is implementing original ways to bring those services into communities around the region using a mobile office.

Perhaps as important as the services the consul renders to Mexican citizens are his efforts to promote international understanding. Those of us who have been in the state for a while often look at recent immigrants and see "foreigners." With a little imagination, we *could* look at them and recall our own ancestors working hard to make their way in a new land.

An advocate for his fellow citizens, Aguilera takes every opportunity to remove obstacles that come between cultures. Language is one effective tool for breaking down those barriers. Aguilera recommends that immigrants learn English. "Language is more than a tool for communication," he observed. "It offers an understanding of peoples' culture, history, humor and way of thinking."

Aguilera not only speaks meticulous English, he is also fluent in French, Italian, Portuguese and, of course, Spanish. He has served as consul general in Sydney, Australia; Toronto, Canada, and most recently, Shanghai.

The Mexican Consulate opened in Indianapolis in November. "The Detroit, Chicago and St. Louis offices were overwhelmed," explained Aguilera, "and Indianapolis was ideally situated geographically for a new consulate." However, he credits the "proactive attitude of both the city and the state" as being the deciding factor in selection of the new location.

As new cultures and new faces arrive in each community, we have the opportunity to help new arrivals to feel at home here. By appreciating the skills each newcomer brings and the richness that diversity adds to the state, we can welcome our new neighbors as part of the continuing peopling of Indiana.



Almost every Hoosier can trace his or her background to immigrants, whether they were ancient, recent, or somewhere in between. Yet we sometimes forget our own immigrant past when new residents arrive with languages, customs and appearances that are foreign to us. Sergio Aguilera, the newly appointed Mexican Consul in Indianapolis shared his philosophy of understanding with Building Community.

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Community Web



Students at **Arlington** and **Emmerich Manual High Schools** recieved computers, set-up instructions, and user training on March 11, 2003. How? These students were a part of the E-Scholars program.

E-Scholars seeks to provide 21st Century Scholars and their families with home computers by offering an entire computer package including three years of CoreComm Internet access for \$50. If this fee is unaffordable, students have the option of earning the benefits by spending a day building computers. In addition, **Indiana Web Academy** instructs the students on how to set up their computers, access the Internet and e-mail, and use online educational resources creating a community web of knowledge and understanding.

E-Scholars
is a joint
program of
Indiana
Web



Academy, 21st
Century Scholars, the
Corporation for
Educational
Technology, J & S
Computing
Assistance and TECH
CORPS Indiana.

Library Connects Community

by Linda Yoder



Connections are the key to success at the **Nappanee** Public Library and a walk through the three structures that make up the recently renovated and expanded facility is where this story begins.

At the heart of this community and the library itself is a 1937 Carnegie-like building that was renovated and expanded in 1984 with an addition that wrapped around the original building on three sides.

The building project initiated partnerships with local organizations like Main Street, the Chamber, city and local school systems to provide programming and services to firmly establish the library as a community center. In addition to classes and programs serving a variety of needs for all ages, a Community Pride Agendum

was developed to focus on local history. A Native Sons and Daughters program invited former residents like Grammy-winner Vance

George, director of the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra Choir, and Emmy-winner, Rob Lehman, Director of the Fetzer Institute, and Fred Neher, one of 6 internationally recognized cartoonists from Nappanee, to return to the community to share their stories.

As a result, the Nappanee Public Library was the recipient of the 1986 Outstanding Indiana Library of the Year award and two international public library awards, the John Cotton and Dana awards, for programming and public relations.

The start of the new millennium opened another chapter with a building project that completed the “wrap” of the original building with a fourth side. A unique local history collection is now located near the Main Street entrance, and the additional meeting room and technology spaces are keep-



ing this library a vibrant center of activity in this small community with classes ranging from computers for seniors to English as a New Language, Spanish, GED, Sign Language and much more.

The busy doors at the Nappanee Public Library tell a powerful tale of what can happen when organizations collaborate within a community through programs like Main Street. By connecting people and cultivating knowledge and respect for the past, they are creating a shared vision for the future.

*We are indeed
separate
individuals,
but you'll find
that most of
what we
become and do
will be due to
our experiences
with others in
community.*



Camping Treats Make Reading Neat

by Debera Bragg & Sarah Steup

On a wintry evening in **Fort Wayne**, twelve small children went camping for two hours in their pajamas!! Why? Because the IPFW Indiana Reading Corps and Taylor University Reading corps sponsored a Reading Campout Literacy Fair for children at the IPFW Daycare Center.

The children went camping for two hours while their parents attended college classes. The attendees ranged from ages 4 to 8 years old. They enjoyed the event in a room set up with large tents that surrounded a make-believe campfire. Tutors and children came dressed for the occasion in their warm pajamas and house slippers. Some even brought their favorite “blankies.”

The Literacy Fair started off inside a large tent where a reading tutor shared a book with the group of children. The book was a story about a little critter’s first camp out experience. As the story was read, the children got involved by playing with their flashlights and answering prediction questions about upcoming events in the story. Next, the children enjoyed three hands-on activities that focused on literacy and camping. One of the activities consisted of making and designing a bookmark with camping stickers and crayons. Toward the end of the evening, everyone came together to enjoy “camping food” like s’mores and apple cider.

The purpose of this event was to show the children that reading could be fun. According to Debera Bragg, IPFW Coordinator, “Once children get interested in a topic, it is very easy to incorporate reading as a natural life event.” And the Reading Campout may have accomplished just that. What started as one evening of story time and fun activities could lead to other wintry evenings where children choose to curl up in the companionship of a good book.



The Indiana Reading Corps, the largest children’s literacy program in the state, is an AmeriCorps program of Indiana Campus Compact designed to respond to President Clinton’s America Reads Challenge. This challenge, that all children read well and independently by the end of the third grade, was issued in response to statistics indicating that as many as 40% of our nation’s third graders cannot read at grade level.

This program provides full and part time AmeriCorps members the opportunity to serve institutions of higher education and elementary schools or school systems as they coordinate tutoring in school-based literacy programs that target second graders. The Indiana Reading Corps employs the “Reading Coaches” tutoring model, a literature focused model that seeks to develop children as avid and independent readers.

For more information contact Kimberly Miller at Kimamill@iupui.edu or visit www.indianacampuscompact.org

Down Home Music

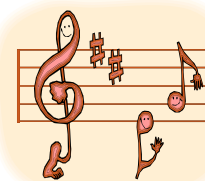
by Shea Fletcher

There is a welling sense of pride in being an American. It is evident in our flags that float above businesses and homes, and in the knowledge that our nation guarantees us the inalienable rights of “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” In addition to national pride, there is state pride.

Charles Moman of **Seymour**, a veteran public school teacher, is the creator of an original musical entitled “Indiana, That’s Where I Belong.” His fourth grade students will be performing at Redding Elementary on April 8th at 9:30, and at Emerson on April 9th at 9:30. In an effort to get students all over Indiana to hear and sing his music, Moman is giving away the production’s theme song to any interested music teacher.

Moman Media Publications has been producing and marketing Indiana-specific software that serve as supplementary materials for teachers since 1993. These products are geared for elementary use, but are being used in many grade levels due to their originality, creativity, and patriotism.

For more information view www.momanmedia.com or email cmoman@voyager.net



Communities Building Community: A new TV series airing in late March

Take a journey from a former electric substation in **Hammond**—now an arts education program for inner-city youth—to **Greenwood's** Independence Park, Indiana's only completely accessible playground where children of all abilities play side-by-side. Finally, end up in a southern Indiana farmers' market where you'll experience downtown Jeffersonville in new ways. Along the way, you'll meet Hoosiers from every corner of the state who are working to make a difference in their communities. They are building health clinics, bringing new businesses to historic downtowns, planting trees, collaborating to provide educational arts programs for disadvantaged youth, and working together across ethnic, religious, and cultural lines to make the places where they live stronger. They are building community, and Indiana 2016 and public television want to take you there!

This spring, Hoosiers across the state will have the opportunity to experience these community-building efforts firsthand, as WFYI presents, *Communities Building Community*.

Communities Building Community is the result of a partnership between Indiana 2016 and WFYI that will consist of 13 episodes devoted to telling the story of building community throughout Indiana. Each episode will center around a theme such as bridging cultures, creating healthier communities, or developing neighborhoods, allowing viewers to explore how activities of all kinds can strengthen a community—from youth service days to dialogue sessions between Jewish and African American women. At the conclusion of each episode, *Action Steps* will direct viewers to general and specific ways to become involved in similar community building efforts in their communities, with more detailed involvement opportunities available on the WFYI website.

Every community is different, and *Communities Building Community* hopes to highlight the diversity of Hoosier communities—from different needs and foci to different people and ways of looking at the world. Through telling stories from across the state that cover a variety of interests, Indiana 2016 will offer viewers new ideas on how to get involved in their communities.

The series will begin airing on WFYI and PBS stations across the state in Spring 2003, with the WFYI premier, "Youth As Community Builders", scheduled for **Thursday, March 27, at 7:30p.m.**

Communities Building Community is supported in part by The Indiana Grantmakers Alliance, Indiana Community Foundations and the Indiana University Center on Philanthropy. All three organizations have seen over and over the value in telling these stories. The 13-part series is being funded in part by The Indianapolis Foundation, Annie E. Casey Foundation, The Health Foundation of Greater Indianapolis, The Indiana Association of United Ways, Indiana Grantmakers Alliance, Indiana Community Foundations and The Owsley Brown II Family.

For more information regarding *Communities Building Community* visit www.wfyi.org.



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